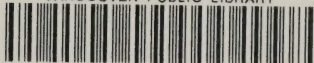


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PATRIOTIC AND OTHER POEMS

CONSTANCE WARD HARPER

1916:
VANCOUVER
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PATRIOTIC AND OTHER POEMS

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1918
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B. C.



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GERMAN KULTUR IN BELGIUM

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KING ALBERT.

A king without a kingdom, without a throne—
Yet an emperor of a world might envy thee—
The Hun has stripped thee bare of all save
honor—

That lies beyond the compass of his power.

Thy name will shine as long as freedom lives,
Resplendent 'midst the glorified immortals—

That galaxy of heroes—like to gods—

That links man's common clay with Divinity.

Thy example through the centuries unborn

Will stir men's hearts and kindle heroic deeds.

Hail, Albert! Brave king of the Belgians, hail!

The homage of the world lies at thy feet.

HEROIC BELGIUM.

Flung into hell of butchery and flames,
By a dishonorable, ruthless foe;
World pity poor torn Belgium justly claims;
She's reaping a harvest that she did not sow.

Her only fault was that her country lay
Across the path of vandals, plunder bent;
She would not let them pass, and so, to-day
Mailed fists her lovely land have scarred and
rent.

Ravished her fields, her cities ashes lie—
The beauty of Louvain and Malines is naught
But empty shells, where spirits moan and sigh,
Seeking for those they lost, but find them not.

There ghosts of her slain children walk o' nights
And cry for vengeance on the modern Hun,
Whose strewn their peaceful land with dreadful
sights,
That make through humanity cold shivers
run.

And still the press is running Belgian blood—
The sky with burning Belgian homes is red:
But Belgium's spirit rides the crimson flood,
Undaunted 'midst her ruins and her dead.

Who can a spirit such as hers conquer?
Never so great as when to-day she stands
Guarding national freedom and honor,
Holding liberty's torch in her wounded hands.

Above the din of war she sounds a note
That will echo along the vistas of time—
Most glorious chapter ever History wrote
Will immortalize Belgium's courage sublime.

What will she write thee, oh, German oppressor—
Thou who smote those honor prompted to
save?
Blots o'er thy escutcheon History will scatter—
Blots all the waters of Lethe cannot lave.

“A SCRAP OF PAPER.”

“For a scrap of paper,”
The German chancellor said,
“Would you spurn our favor—
Bring war upon your head?”

Eighteen seventy treaty
Is antiquated now—
Belgium's neutrality
Before our might must bow.

When the war is over,
If England holds her hand,
We'll bestow upon her
A recompense in land.

Therefore, why embroil
For such a trivial thing
Yourselves in a quarrel
That will disaster bring?”

There two empire's spokesmen
 Stood, sternly face to face—
One a loyal Briton,
 And one of German race.

An anxious world waited
 That fateful moment's work;
And with breath abated,
 Heard England would not shirk:

“Back your base terms we fling—
 Britannia keeps her word;
Though she may have to bring
 Her country to the sword:

For that scrap of paper
 Holds England's signature;
It she'll ne'er dishonor—
 'Tis sacred unto her.

No man of British breed
 Would shrink from sacrifice—
And unto death would bleed,
 When Honor is the price.

This cost beyond reckoning
 We willingly will pay;
For Honor a-beckoning,
 States follow or decay.”

THE BRITISH LION AND HIS WHELPS.

The British Lion raised his head,
And shook his tawny mane;
Battle-light in his eyes shone red;
Eagles threatened again.

He stood there in the morning breeze
Watching the sky-line dark;
And lashed his tail about his knees;
He'd heard a war-dog bark.

Then suddenly his mighty roar
Startled the peaceful dawn;
Rumbling o'er land and sea, it tore
To reach his brood of brawn.

Soon from that brood came back reply—
“We've heard thy call for aid;
Faster than German eagles fly,
We come to meet the raid.

For whosoever threatens thee,
Must reckon with thy sons;
We are unto the death with thee;
Through us the same blood runs.

Proud to defend thy sacred head,
We'll fight till millions fall;
Then millions more will replace our dead;
Our strength scarce tapped at all.

For we are whelps of British breed,
Free as air kissed by sun;
We'll ne'er desert thee in thy need,
Because we're free we come.”

THE BATTLE CALL.

Ye sons of the Empire, forward to battle;
The mother is calling, haste to her aid;
Hear ye the guns and sabers rattle,
Of Goths and Huns, as they rush on to raid?

Rally around her; 'twas she gave nurture
To ye breeds that are free, as light from the
sun.

Cowards alone would in danger desert her,
And Britain will ne'er own a coward her son.

Hold high the banner our ancestors won us—
Banner of Freedom—dyed in their blood.
Is there a Briton so abject, so spineless,
Who'd live to see Freedom trailed in the
mud?

Then answer the call by: "Here am I, mother;
Send me, I'm ready my heart's blood to shed.
Barbarian kultur ne'er shall smother
Fair Liberty's flame, till thy sons all lie
dead."

THE DESTRUCTION OF RHEIMS
CATHEDRAL.

Mass of debris and crumbling walls,
Are all that of thee now remain;
No light through thy rose-window falls—
Thou lovely gem of ancient Rheims!

Thy facade, one of noblest art,
Was by mediaeval sculptors wrought;
And pilgrims came from every part;
And inspiration from thee sought.

Nor sought in vain; for none beheld
Thy beauty with a soul unmoved:
Who thought on earth, or hell, there dwelled
Such vandals as the Germans proved?

Where'er this blighting scourge has passed,
It left behind ruin and pain:
Nor will this shameful crime be last
Of those who fired fair Louvain.

Not even Red Cross flags could save
The sacred place from shot and shell;
And wounded soldiers in the nave,
Were buried when the ruin fell.

Is this the culture you'd impose
'Gainst semi-barbarous Muscovite?
Do you who fight like Huns suppose
The world such culture will invite?

Your acts, disgraceful e'en to hordes
With no pretence to culture's name,
Have placed upon the German swords
Foul blots repentance can't redeem.

Cursed be thou who inspired such waste;
Who brought upon thy land such shame;
Thy awful crimes must soon be faced;
Thou bloodiest Moloch known to fame.

A WAR TOAST.

Here is a toast for you, Kaiser,
I'll drink it in blood-red wine;
Emblem of the occasion, sir,
And stain on that hand of thine.

It may not be to your liking—
I rather think 'tis not—
Here's to the day of your beating:
May you get it soon and hot!

You've often in the past drunk
To your army and The Day;
I'll to another time drink—
To the hour when you shall pay.

Gethsemane you've the world brought:
To Calvary you shall go.
Pity it is your blood is naught
To that you've caused to flow:

For if you had a billion lives,
Those lives could not atone
For all the misery and sighs
You've caused—thou heart of stone.

Ambition is a risky ship
When a mad king's at the helm;
But few return who take the trip—
And you're on the rocks, Wilhelm.

THE ROYAL PARANOIAC.

Nebuchadnezzar Wilhelm the Second
Sat in his council hall;
Amidst chiefs of his great war-bund,
And swept his gaze o'er all.

I, Emperor of Germany,
Am ordained, by High grace,
Vicegerent of the Deity,
O'er all the human race.

Therefore, my sirs, I've called you here
To give you my command—
Go forth through Belgium, never fear;
God's sword is in your hand.

Then on to France, burn, pillage, sack,
Until she prostrate lies;
Then we shall strip her bleeding back,
And leave her to her sighs.

Upon her tribute we shall raise,
As did our sires of yore,
To greatest empire under skies;
And prospects still before.

Belgium, Holland, England shall fall;
Then many kingdoms more:
And I'll be suzerain over all;
Make haste, make haste to war."

"Hark, king!" a voice from Heaven cries—
"Wilhelm. thy hour has struck;
My ears have heard thy victims' sighs,
Thy crown from thee I pluck.

But thou, unlike great Babylon's king,
Shall ne'er regain thy rule;
For the moving finger writing
Hath traced the words—thou fool."

THE WAR LORD.

Thou cruel, ruthless, demon king!
For many years thou sought to bring
The world to devastating war;
Behold, what thy ambition bore!

Disown in vain thy hell-born child;
Thy name on History's annals filed,
As parent of this monstrous thing,
Shall future's condemnation bring.

Thy weeping country, rent and torn,
Will curse the day that thou wert born—
Will deprecate the fatal hour,
That saw thee raised to kingly power.

Napoleon's steps thou wouldst have trod
To make thyself a warrior god;
Without his genius, thought to be
A world dictator such as he.

Couldst thou not read on History's brow
Obloquy buries such as thou;
The world will ne'er submit to feel
A conqueror's lacerating heel.

Nemesis follows on thy trail—
The blow is sure—she will not fail
To deal thee, Hohenzollern king,
The fate reserved for such a thing.

THE RED CROSS FLAG.

Where'er the Red Cross flies its flag,
The steps of Mercy do not lag—
To battle front it forward goes—
Its mission is to friends and foes.

Dauntless, amidst fierce shot and shell,
It goes within the gates of hell;
And soothes the sufferer in pain;
And thinketh not of self or gain.

There is no soldier 'neath God's sun,
Except the ruthless, cursed Hun,
Who'd fire on its sacred folds;
Mankind such reverence for it holds.

A CANADIAN SOLDIER'S TRIBUTE
TO HIS NATIVE LAND.

In many countries I have dwelt since I left
- friends and home,
To sail with the first contingent far across the
briny foam;
But ne'er a land I yet have found so dear on
mother earth,
As Canada, sweet Canada, fair country of my
birth.

I love thee, broad Dominion, stretching far
from sea to sea;
Thy mountains and thy valleys all are very
dear to me;
Contentment and prosperity within thy borders be;
Thy laws the guardians of truth, honor and
liberty.

Long may a harvest bountiful reward thy toilers' care,
Thy sons be brave and honest and thy daughters true and fair,
For common weal united may our country ever stand,
And flourish like the maple green, the emblem
of our land.

I quaff this cup of ruby wine, dear Canada, to thee;
And fondly hope ere many months thy welcome shores to see;
But should the Fates decide that death here hand me his decree,
I'll die, a prayer writ in my heart, loved Canada, for thee.

THE WAR DRAMA.

I dreamt I stood on a rocky height,
And looked the war zone o'er:
Where millions in blood-conflict fight,
As men ne'er fought before.

Ah me! It was a fearful sight
To see the brave blood run:
Curse on the Huns whose envious spite
Causes such deeds be done.

It seemed as if a general doom
To sons of man had come—
That earth to hell had given room,
And Peace was stricken dumb:

That powers of dark from high smiled down
To see Death glut the grave;
That incensed Deity wore a frown
And earth refused to save.

With hearts black as the infernal pit,
The Prussians took the field;
On lances bearing babies spit
And women made their shield.

Their war lord, safe in bomb-proof house,
Directed from the rear;
The Devil, his ally, sneered—"The mouse!
Hell won't want him, I fear!"

A band of Belgians met the horde
Hell had spewed o'er their land:
And History does not record
A more heroic stand.

But Prussians fight like wolves, in mass—
Ten to one is their chance—
After three weeks they gained the pass
That opens into France.

In passing they had much to do—
Torment, rape, kill and burn—
Soon Belgians knew the hellish crew—
Alas! the price to learn.

But, hark! A voice from Britain roars—
“We’ve heard your cry for aid,
Laden troop ships now leave our shores:
We’ll avenge this foul raid.

Our sea dogs sniff the track of the Hun;
And what they seize they hold—
Dearly he’ll pay for what he has done—
Honor for hell he has sold.”

Hell’s vandals heard that voice of fate,
And trembled as they raged—
’Gainst England hurled their hymn of hate—
And frothed like mad beasts caged.

Like bullying curs that never fight,
Save odds are on their side,
The German curs turned tail at sight
Of the Grey Dogs on the tide.

Though Britain grasps their nation’s throat,
In Kiel Canal they hide:
And “Safety First” their whining note
While the Greys keep watch outside.

FIGHT ON, FIGHT ON, BRAVE ENGLAND.

Fight on, fight on, brave England!
This is a righteous war,
Till oppressors bound and banned,
Menace the world no more.

Never shown more glorious
Your Empire than to-day—
Your army victorious—
Your navy holding sway—

Your nations all united,
In strong and holy bond,
To keep war's flame ignited
Till despotism's bound.

What care we for reverses;
We feel that we shall win;
So trials cannot daunt us;
We know our fighting men.

Shades of bold Drake and Nelson!
Imperishable Past!
Say, saw ye braver deeds done,
When ye were at the mast?

Come, Black Prince; come, Wellington,
Stand forth and testify—
Ye lived 'mongst doughty deeds done—
Saw ye men braver die?

And ye, valiant Marlborough!

Make at your side a place;

The genius of Kitchener

Is worthy of the space.

Sail on, sail on, O England!

Your light can never fail;

Freedom's beacon in your hand,

Darkness cannot prevail.

Star of the world's awaking

Points to a brighter day:

Through dark the light is breaking—

The sun is on the way.

Beyond the peaceful Future

Stands in her robes of white:

We'll wade through blood to reach her;

The goal is worth the fight.

Strive on, strive on, dear England;

God's purpose in this war

Surely is to free His land

For peace-reign ever more.

WHY GREAT BRITAIN FIGHTS.

The puissant British Empire might have stayed
her hand;

For she was not attacked—no foe was on her
land:

Never forget the fact she wasn't compelled to
fight:

She could have waited the onset and increased
her might.

She might have found excuses, being unprepared—

Who could have cast a stone at her—who would have dared?

No free-born nation lives but should by moral right

Stand by gallant Belgium's side and for freedom fight.

She might have her resources increased many fold—

And in the end her hand exhausted Europe hold—

Hers would be the hegemony by the right of might,

But Britons thought 'twould mean disgrace—
and so they fight.

That's why Britannia threw her trident in the scale;

That's why Britannia threw her sword into the scale;

That's why Britannia threw her gold into the scale;

That's why Britannia threw her fate into the scale.

Because she threw all these into the balance—

And freely staked her all in Liberty's defence—

The star of British moral splendor will be seen

Still shining, ages hence, undimmed 'gainst History's screen.

A REPLY TO PACIFISTS.

Cease ye, irresponsible praters, cease,
From your untimely talk of peace;
Ye know, full well, foul wrong's been done
By the bloodthirsty, ruthless Hun.

Shall we then stand like cowards by
And see a gallant nation die?
Are England's treaties little worth,
And principles that gave them birth?

Indeed, it tries our patience sore
To read your treatises 'gainst war;
For what ye say in solemn way,
Was clear before as light of day.

Ye state in ponderous paragraphs,
That war our best and bravest saps,
Munition's labor is but waste—
As if these facts we have not faced.

Think ye we like to see our sons
Made powder's food by cruel guns?
But much as we British detest this war,
Hunnish injustice we hate more.

We know war, perhaps better than you—
We realize its horrors, too—
With our best blood we're paying the cost,
Freely we give it, nor count it lost—

Who dies if justice and honor live?
If these two die, who'd wish to live?
For civilization we're at war—
'Tis youth, not age, plays for this score.

Ye place warring nations in a group—
Condemn us all at one fell swoop:
In name of justice we call, "Halt!
Think ye we're equally at fault?"

Miss Addams, say; Dr. Jordan, say—
Face to face with your country, say—
Think ye that honest Abe was wrong
To help the weak against the strong?

That this great man, who loved his kind,
Found war and killing to his mind?
He knew, before he cast the dice,
Peace can be bought at too dear a price.

If Britain of Peace had smugly talked,
While Germany through Belgium stalked,
Pacifists had been satisfied
To ignobly live, though honor died.

Anything practical you can suggest,
Say it, and let it stand the test,
But cease, we pray, your maudlin prattle—
As empty as a baby's rattle.

What we've said o'er and o'er before,
We here will emphasize once more—
We're in this war and we're in to stay
Till the mad Huns are chained for aye.

GERMANY BEFORE THE BAR OF PUBLIC OPINION.

Frau Germany, before the great assize
Of public opinion the world over,
You're charged with cruelty, treachery and lies,
And breaking solemn pledges moreover.

You may buy up all the papers that you please;
And make them special pleaders for your
case;

Your protestations are not worth a sneeze;
Belgium's ruin points Germany's disgrace.

If you talk till doomsday of "necessity,"
The world will not believe in your defence;
The ruling of the great majority
Is given 'gainst you by the evidence.

You may as well call off your spies and liars—
Learned professors waste their precious
breath in vain;
Your honor lies among the smouldering fires—
As lifeless as the ashes of Louvain.

PEACE AND WAR.

With saddened brow and drooping wings,
Fair Peace stood brooding o'er the world:
Ne'er had her eyes beheld such things—
As now before her lay unfurled.

Was this a farce of Hell on Earth?
Scarce real the cataclysm seemed,
Had fantasy wild given birth
To imagery hereto undreamed?

Else, God's fiat—Let us make man!
Had changed to—Let war man unmake,
For ne'er, since that creative dawn,
Did Death such heavy payment take.

Or—awful thought, it blanched her face!—
Was God no longer in His heaven—
Was there a demon in His place,
Who unto carnage earth had given?

Great shells flew hurtling through the air,
Exploding with murderous bang;
And mingling with the trumpets' blare,
Wild laughter from Olympus rang.

Dead men and horses, thousands, lay
In heaps upon the blood-soaked earth;
While wounded, mad with agony,
Were supplicating God for death.

And still, and still, fresh troops came on,
Across the shambles to attack,
And fought, as did the Goth and Hun,
Till thousands more bestrewed their track.

No time was there to bury dead;
Foul pestilential stench arose,
That sickened, more than steel or lead,
The masses of opposing foes.

These are the nations' choicest sons—
None there of weak, degenerate sires;
The drain for war comes not from slums;
Those, left behind, breed in their mires.

While strong and fit go ever out—
As yesterday, to-day, to-morrow;
Till virile manhood's seed dies out;
And chivalry droops in sorrow.

Thus, from the weaklings of the race,
Must future generations come;
Great God, have pity on their case!
By miracle avert their doom!

Night dropped her mantle, but in vain,
To hide the carnage of the day;
The burning city of Louvain,
Lit up the sky with lurid ray.

And now new horrors came in view,
Unnoticed 'midst the battle roar—
The homeless ones passed in review;
Hungry, and maimed, by cursed war.

Peace turned her streaming eyes on high,
"How long, Oh Lord! will slaughter reign—
How long, 'neath iron heels, shall lie
Thy patient poor in direst pain?"

An angel, with a flaming sword,
Appeared against the western sky,
"I bring a message from our Lord—
This war's the last—thy day is nigh."

VANCOUVER.

Fair Empress of Pacific slope!
Pride of its matchless sea!
City of promise—western hope!
We do thee fealty.

The snow-capped mountains are thy crown—
No jewels bright as they—
Sparkling in light through ages down,
On to eternity.

Piled up against thy western sky
Green line of forest dark—
Where giant trees their crests raise high
O'er peerless Stanley Park.

City of haunting loveliness!
Pulsating modern mart!
The spell enchantment o'er thee weaves
Links us with Nature's heart.

Terminus of the great highway
That runs from sea to sea:
And o'er the briny waterway
Thy argosies ply free—

Carrying to the Orient
Products of Western lands:
Bringing back to the Occident
The work of cunning hands.

History will give to thee a place
Greater than famed Bagdad—
Nature on thee with lavish grace
Bestowed the best she had.

THE BEAUTIFUL LAND OF DREAMS.

We set sail o'er a glassy sea for the beautiful
land of dreams—
That land so bright, for there's no night where
the sun forever beams!
We placed the star of hope at the prow and
love was at the helm;
What need we fear? With those two near, no
storms could overwhelm.

For days we sailed, then a gale arose and drove
us from our course;
The star of hope began to dim, and love to lose
resource:
Around us drifted derelicts containing broken
hearts:
Then love consulted hope again and scanned
anew our charts.

But what could we do with one mast through,
and a sail in several parts;
So we drifted on, and mermaids' song came sad
to aching hearts.
White hands reached up to swamp our boat—
we strove and beat them off;
And as they sank we heard some curse, and
others laugh and scoff.

Long years passed ere we managed to reach
 resignation's dreary land,
Where a sad-faced pilot boarded our boat and
 steered us o'er the sand.
So ended our voyage to the land of dreams that
 youthful fancies paint
With colours bright, but they fade in a night
 and leave but outlines faint.

But still I trust some far-off day we'll meet in
 that beautiful land;
Where the star of hope goes never down, and
 lovers stroll hand in hand;
Where ideals, of poetic minds, shall blossom as
 fancy deems
When we sail out in our tiny bark for the rose-
 hued land of dreams.

THE STORY OF THE BLEST.

We walked along a grassy lane, beneath the
 harvest moon,
That dimmed the stars, and milky way swept
 with her brilliant broom.
Sweet incense from the new-mown hay arose
 and filled the air;
And we believed in fairies, for we felt their
 presence there.

Her little hand lay on my arm, as light as
 thistle down.
Her hair shone in the moonlight — fair as
 Ariadne's crown.
I felt as if I were a king, and she my lovely
 queen,
And yonder house our palace, glimpsing white
 among the green.

We passed down to the river, where we watched
the dazzling view
Of the moon's trail on the water dark—the
trail that's ever new;
And in the far-off woodland heard the whip-
poorwill's plaint cry;
Whilst near, among the branches, came a little
cooing sigh.

I turned from the jewelled pathway and I
looked into her face,
That held for me the sweetness and the glory
of her race.
And hot blood surged within me as I clasped
her to my breast;
And we told the story, new, though old—the
story of the blest.

A CHILD'S LOGIC.

An old man rocking a little child,
Was crooning a song of lullaby,
While a lad of five, eyes wonder-mild,
Fixed on the sleeping child, stood nigh.

“They have no hair, then have, then haven't,”
He murmured, gazing from babe to man;
“Why even Daddy's locks are scant,
And he's not old like Uncle Dan.

The man becomes a babe again!
What waste of life to come to this—
From man to babe—oh, what a sin!”
He wondered how God made the miss.

He passed his hand o'er his own thick curls:
Those curls would thin as he up grew:
How oft he'd thought them like a girl's,
And asked his mother to snip them through.

Gone now was his contempt of girls;
No woman ever bald became;
Better put up with skirts and curls
Than be a babe again—what shame!

He'd ask dear God that very night
To let him always keep his curls,
And promise Him that come what might,
He'd ne'er again make fun of girls.

THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

Passing along a city street,
I saw upon a garbage heap—
A sight pathetic, it seemed to me—
The stone cold corpse of a Christmas tree.

Branches hung limp, its crest lay low;
Cruel was fate to treat it so—
Lately it swayed in the forest free—
Poor little baby Christmas tree!

How proudly just the night before,
Full two score gifts its branches bore;
Decked with tinsel, fine as could be;
Brave, sturdy, little Christmas tree.

The children laughed and clapped their hands,
Trooping around in merry bands;
For all were filled with mirth and glee
At sight of the pretty Christmas tree.

Alas! We cannot bind joy's wings;
He flies, and in the distance sings;
And hearts grow sad when glad days flee;
Through tears we see last Christmas' tree.

YOUTH.

Come gather flowers while we may;
Seasons of joy will quickly pass;
Hope's flowers bloom and wither away,
Some ere their buds have oped, alas!

We'll drink the wine of life and sing
Whilst youth is bright, whilst youth is fair,
For Time, his scythe in his hand, will bring
And cut the vine youth's grapes did bear.

Dance while the red blood flows along
Arteries, free as the course of the stream,
That hums from mountain to sea its song,
And laughs in the sun and moonlight's gleam.

There many are who shake their heads,
And tell us life should be sober and staid—
Much time be spent o'er prayer and beads
And thoughts of the grave where flesh is laid.

They tell us flowers were made to lure,
That wine of life should be drunk in sadness:
Such blaspheme God, who placed them there;
He surely meant them for our gladness.

So we'll sing and dance while yet we may,
And quaff the wine of life with joy,
And, spite of all that croakers say,
We'll snatch the good from the alloy.

A PRAYER.

Quicken, O Lord, the living dead with Thy all-
embracing mind,
Awaken thirst for life in those whose complain-
ings choke the wind,
Loathing and hatred, wrath and shame destroy
all good on earth,
Give a redemptive spirit, Lord — create new
vigorous birth.

Light us with Thy celestial fire for intensive
life and truth,
And fill our hearts for suffering souls with pas-
sionate love and ruth;
Give visions and creations of that higher sense
of life—
That wings our souls with courage high and
arms us for the strife.

Aid us in understanding latent powers we have
within,
To rise above the dust of life, that covers with
shame and sin;
Waken in us wholesome laughter, 'tis forgotten
a long while,
'Twill cleanse and animate our souls for the
dark hours of trial.

Oh, send courageous teachers, Lord, to tell us
of our faults—
To combat what is bad in us, and bring out
good that halts:
Let these chosen messengers clear our stifling
atmosphere,
Remove from us the clay of earth, that clogs
the soul with fear.

Then man will arise and find the trail—the trail
that he had lost—
The voice crying in the wilderness told him he
oft had cost:
And not to self-satisfaction will the new-born
man aspire;
A better life, a purer soul, will be his heart's
desire.

MEN OF THE NORTHLAND.

We are men of the great northland, sturdy and
firm of bone;
Our fathers were not remittance men—they got
no help from home;
Our mothers, strong and stout-hearted, be-
queathed to us good health—
That heritage, the corner-stone of every na-
tion's wealth.

We plow the land and sow it, and we reap the
golden grain,
And breathe health with our labour, and know
not luxury's pain;
For best tonics for man and beast come from
the air and sod—
Come from old Doctor Nature, filled with heal-
ing breath of God.

We glory in our northern homes among the
maple and pine:
Keep to your southern climates, effete of the
human line,
Keep in shade of your leafy palms, loll in trop-
ical heat,
Brace us with breath from the great northland
and stand us on our feet:

And we shall forth to conquer and will play
our parts like men:

The laggards get no welcome here—our coun-
try's not for them;

He who would dwell amongst us must be made
of sterner stuff

Than he who dilly-dallies with life, playing his
game of bluff.

The passport to our northland is writ in our
lumber and soil;

And no man should come hither but he who is
willing to toil;

For Nature yields her treasures to none save
the thrifty hand:

To him she'll give full measure in this free,
bountiful land.

LANKY PARSON JIM.

To our lumber camp there came one day a man,
so gaunt and thin,

It seemed as if great scarcity had caved his
midriff in:

His high cheek bones, like an Indian's, bulged
from his pale thin face,

And colorless lips, kept firmly shut, by a streak
disclosed their place.

His eyes shone from their sockets deep, like
fever burned in him,

In stature tall as Hamlet's ghost, he rattled
bones in skin;

Few were his words, as one who's loath to waste
a precious breath,

For fear his lungs might go on strike and cause
untimely death.

Thinking him of weak condition, boss gave him
an easy job;
Failing to note his muscles, hard as a wrought
iron knob:
His mates, kind hearted fellows, though they
twitted him to his face,
Were always quick with helping hand to stand
the brunt in his place.

He was known in camp by the soubriquet of
Lanky Parson Jim;
Because of religious tendencies, we thought it
suited him:
He did not mind our little jokes, at least he
did not seem:
And by and by we turned our wit upon another
theme.

Soon after Lanky Jim's advent, a half-breed
came to camp—
A big rough-spoken fellow, and a thorough-
going scamp—
Always ready, as bullies are, to pick a quarrel
with the weak—
His attentions turned to Lanky and to little
Dickie Greek.

Jim, when he could, avoided him, and heeded
not his sneers:
The half-breed thought that this was due to
cowardice and fears;
So he increased his insolence until one Sunday
night,
When Jim and Dickie sat before the logs aburn-
ing bright.

The half-breed sauntered down the room, and,
as he passed the pair,

Thrust his big foot between the rungs, and
jerked Dicky from his chair.

"You cowardly brute!" cried Parson Jim,
"I've mind to smash your face."

"Better try it!" the half-breed sneered, with
hideous grimace.

Lanky shot out his skinny arm; the bully went
down before,

And lay a moment stupified upon the pine-
wood floor;

Then springing up he rushed at Jim with queer-
ish bellowing roar;

The latter dealt another blow that sent him
'gainst the door.

Loggers, who'd gathered round about, cheered
loud for Parson Jim.

"By golly!" cried one, "He's the stuff—who'd
ever thought 'twas in 'im!"

Another bout, and all the fight was gone from
half-breed Joe;

And he was glad to slink away from his vic-
torious foe.

From that day forth the big half-breed became
a different man—

From bully of our camp he turned as meek as
Mary's lamb:

And it was long before the boys got over their
surprise—

To see that weakly Parson Jim turn hero before
their eyes.

THE INDIAN LOVERS' FLIGHT.

Upon a lonely hillside stood a stalwart Huron
chief,
The hot blood coursing through his veins, as he
eyed the scene beneath;
Where camp fires of the Iroquois stood out
against the dark;
And he could see men move about, and hear the
wolf dogs bark.

Within that camp there dwelt a maid as lovely
as the morn;
That maiden he would have to wife—by all his
gods he'd sworn.
Despite her father's warriors bold, for her he'd
come this night;
And waited, till behind the clouds, the moon
obscured her light.

A footfall near among the trees put him upon
his guard—
If his enemy discovered him, he'd strike—and
strike him hard.
The belated warrior passed along and saw not
as he went
The Huron chief, who waited there on boldest
robbery bent.

A maiden came without the camp and stood
beneath a tree;
Her lover's sharp eyes pierced the gloom—'twas
his sweet Armanee.
With stealthy steps he crept along and soon
was by her side.
She started, but seeing 'twas he, she smiled,
then quickly sighed.

“Why art thou here, rash chief?” she said, beneath her bated breath.

“For you, my princess, I have come within these jaws of death.”

“Go, go,” she whispered, “ ’Tis no place for you to linger here.”

“Come with me, then,” he whispered back into her anxious ear.

One glance toward the camp she gave, then turned with him and fled,

But scarce they’d reached the hilltop ere news of her flight was spread.

All night, behind, the forest rang with wild and savage cries;

But still the lovers had the lead when aurora streaked the skies.

Then she began to weaken like a mortally wounded fawn:

Her lover took her in his arms and pressed on through the dawn.

If only they could reach the lake, where lay his birch canoe,

Upon its waters they’d be safe — none follow could, he knew.

He strained at every muscle, but his heart began to sink;

For capture now seemed certain — he could never reach the brink:

“You must leave me,” cried the maiden, “for, unburdened, thou canst flee;

I shall but suffer chastisement — cruel death they’d deal to thee.”

He clasped her tighter to his breast, "I'd rather
die," said he;

"So struggle not, sweet princess, for you there-
by hinder me."

And now a clearing brought to view the waters
of the lake.

If saved he vowed his manitou an offering he
would make.

By superhuman effort he nigh reached the
watery goal,

Just as the leading Iroquois upon them swiftly
stole.

Bidding the maiden launch the boat, he turned
upon his foe

And, raising high his tomahawk, laid their pur-
suer low.

The arrows whistled past them as they glided
from the land,

But in their evil mission failed, save one that
grazed his hand.

'Twas thus the beauteous Iroquois became the
Huron's bride

And they'd ne'er cause to regret that flight
through the forest dark and wide.

A LEGENDARY TALE.

'Tis writ on legend's faded page
That long ago, in distant age,
Here, where now demolition falls,
A castle reared its massive walls.

Now ghostly feet the ruins tread
O'er mossy carpet Nature's spread:
And autumn winds send swirling down
The tinted leaves, red, gold and brown.

And as they fall they seem to sigh,
And lichened stones send back reply—
"Your red will fade, your gold will dull—
Like us your glory come to null.

These halls that cavaliers have paced,
And lovely, noble ladies graced,
In costly cloak and dress arrayed,
The slimy worm doth now invade."

Within these walls there dwelt a knight,
On whom false love had set its blight:
He sought the church, to ease his heart,
And lived his life out here apart.

The reign of Pleasure being o'er,
She was shown out the castle door:
And brown-clad men of solemn mien
Brought austere change upon the scene.

No longer did these halls resound
To revelry and merry sound—
Luxury's trappings banished were—
Leaving spaces gloomy and bare.

Monks murmured prayers o'er rosary beads,
Asking God's pardon for man's deeds;
And at nightfall at vespers knelt
And praises sang for blessings felt.

The sun sent forth a glimmering ray
To herald coming of the day.
A distant bird the silence broke—
His mate replied—the world awoke.

Called from his bed by Matin bell,
Each brother left his humble cell—
To chapel went the little throng,
To chant the holy morning song.

When, lo! upon the ear a sound
Made the worshipers' hearts rebound.
Again it came, a wailing peal,
Enough to make their blood congeal.

'Twas mortal's cry in dire stress
Of agonizing helplessness.
So loudly on the ear it smote
It could not be so far remote.

Quoth the knight-prior, "I'll go see:
Brother Augustine, come with me:
Pray ye all for the unknown one
From whom these cries for help are come."

Their way they wended to the glen,
Down rocky steep and o'er the fen.
The cries by now had fainter grown,
And ended in a long-drawn moan.

Soon they came where upon the ground
A woman's prostrate form they found.
In climbing up the rocky steep
She'd fallen in a gully deep.

Blood trickled o'er her stony bed.
She fainted had or else was dead.
The prior bade Augustine bring
Some water from a near-by spring.

While the brother for water sped
The prior gently raised her head:
He saw her face—"Oh, God!" he cried,
" 'Tis Alice, my unfaithful bride."

His voice recalled her back to life.
"Yes, I am Alice, your true wife—
I faithful was, by heaven swear!
Your false friend lured me to his lair—

Pretending that I should find there
Your wounded body—'twas a snare.
Kiss me, dear Philip, ere I go—
I soon shall leave this vale of woe."

He laid her head against his breast—
Tenderly granted her request.
She gave a happy gasp, then sighed;
And ere the monk returned, she died.

They buried her in a mossy nook
Beside a little babbling brook,
And prayers each day the prior said
Beside the grave of his loved dead.

One day the brothers found him there,
His hands together clasped in prayer—
But life was gone, and glassy eyes
Were upturned toward the summer skies.

To rest they laid him in the dell,
By side of her he'd loved so well.
And people say there, once a year,
The lovers hand in hand appear.

JAHRASART AND HAYAT-AL-NUFUS.

AN ARABIAN ROMANCE.

All day she sat in her chamber dim;
Her distraught thoughts were all of him—
Her lord and husband, Jahrasart;
Allah, pity her broken heart!

He'd vowed a vow by the Lord of Might,
She, cooleth of his heart and sight,
Should with him until death abide—
His one delight, his only bride.

Now false to his plighted word was he:
"Oh, Thou Compassionate One!" cried she,
"Bring back my love's past constancy—
My heart from deadly grief set free."

All day she heard, yet heeded not,
The life without that sold and bought:
And now, and then, the house-dog's bark
Came dim to ears nigh closed with cark.

She thought of all her life with him,
Of her lovely sons that moonlight dim;
Anon she arose and her mirror sought;
To see if her beauty lacked in aught.

Back there came from the crystal bright
An image fair as heaven's light—
All grace and beauteous witchery—
Like nymph of paradise was she.

Those hazel eyes like jewels shine.
Her flesh with lovely tints combine—
Snow white and red anemone—
A form to tempt all men that see.

“There's no true love in man!” quoth she;
“Trust not in his fidelity—
A fairer face he sees, and lo!—
The faithful love of years must go.

I will not stay to bear my shame
Within his house—now home in name—
Peace sent to lovers bearing woe,
Is best attained when far they go.

I will return to my father's place,
And there shall seek, by Allah's grace,
Patience to bear what burns my breast,
Until I pass to Heaven's rest.”

She clapped her hands, her maidens came.
She bade them bring her robes, the same
She'd worn when she a bride had come,
With glad heart to her husband's home.

All ready was, yet she delayed,
And last farewell her love-nest bade;
But swooned as her feet the threshold past:
Her maidens thought she'd breathed her last.

They buffeted themselves, and cried—
“Allah curse this day our lady died!”
It seemed as if doomsday had come;
And 'midst this din their lord came home.

“Ho, slaves!” he cried, “what is amiss,
That you should make such fuss as this?”
Then catching sight of his wife, thought dead,
He called on Allah, and beat his head.

“Death come to me, Thou envious cur,
And smite me as Thou smotest her;
For Thou who caused this wrong to be,
Hath ta'en what sweetened life for me.”

He cast himself upon her breast:
“Oh, Allah! grant me this request:—
Give back to me my love, my wife,
Or take from me my wretched life.

In Heaven I ask no houri fair,
With eyes like sloes and midnight hair;
But grant, oh, Lord, Hayat may be
My wife, through all eternity.”

Hayat al' Nufus oped her eyes,
And heard around her groans and sighs;
“Oh, God!” she cried, “deliver me
From life which gars me misery.”

With joy-tears streaming from his eyes,
Jahrasart raised hands toward the skies,
“Praise be to Him, who lives in Heaven!
My love, my wife, He back hath given.

Oh, speak, my Hayat, speak to me;
Tears flood my eyes, I cannot see;
I thought, before appointed time,
My life had passed with passing thine."

"How can I live my soul in flames—
Like scorpion whips love's longing pains—
Go, leave me here to die alone,
And o'er my corpse your new wife throne."

"I did but jest; I love but you;
Now hear my vow, which I renew—
If e'er I break my faith with thee,
May Almighty Allah punish me."

And so they lived in love's delight,
And children fair grew in their sight,
Till the All-Conquering King of Might
Brought them to His Heaven of light.

THE VICONTI'S BRIDE.

That tower, on yon giddy height,
So sombre in the fading light,
Casting its shadow o'er the lake,
Like some fabulous, monster, snake,
Was a Visconti chieftain's pride
And home of his unwilling bride.

The tale I will to you relate
Goes back to very early date—
When the Guelfs and Ghibellenes
Were the most deadly enemies—
Each party sought his rival's life,
And filled the land with bloody strife.

It chanced, upon a day in May,
When Nature's smile o'er all things lay,
In a lovely vale, nigh to the sea,
A Guelfic chief and his wife-to-be
Rode gaily o'er flower-starred grass,
And entered on the mountain pass.

Her eyes, clear as a glacial stream,
Held in their depths a starry gleam;
Black curls that to her saddle hung,
The zephyr breezes played among—
Queen of beauty was she indeed—
More winsome grace ne'er sat a steed.

They came to where the rocks rose high,
And boughs above nigh hid the sky,
When suddenly a horseman tall
Appeared against the slimy wall—
'Twas a bold Ghibelline lord,
Who barred their way with naked sword.

"Halt! thou accursed Guelfic chief;
Our meeting will, I trust, be brief;
I little thought that near the spot
Where you my brother left to rot,
Within the time of one month's space,
I'd meet his slayer face to face."

Count Della Torre reined his horse,
"I'll send you join your brother's corse";
With gesture fierce he drew his blade,
And swift and strong the thrust he made;
Had't found its mark, the end had been
Of the Visconti there and then.

The latter spurred his horse aside:
The steel went just a trifle wide;
Whirling, a lightning thrust he made,
And pierced the Count's right shoulder blade;
The thrust was given with such force,
The wounded man fell from his horse.

Mad to avenge his father's son,
And finish what he had begun,
The victor, springing from his steed,
His dagger drew to do the deed:
But love, with swifter wings than hate,
Became the instrument of fate.

Lady Dorena, in a spell,
Held speechless till her lover fell,
With a wild shriek, leaped o'er the grass,
E'er he could give the coup de grace,
Opposed her body to the knife,
And pleaded for her lover's life.

Visconti's arm dropped to his side,
Limp as a rag tossed by the tide:
Her face he had not seen before;
Its beauty thrilled him to the core;
Love took possession of his breast,
And rage into the background pressed.

"Lady, I will forego his life,
If you'll consent to be my wife:
I swear by heaven, on bent knee,
You naught shall have to fear from me,
Until my love's returned by thee,
Wife in name only thou shall be."

"The day will never dawn," said she,
"That I could give my love to thee:
But often to my knees I'll fall,
And Heaven's blessings on you call,
If you to me will spare his life:
What joy gives an unwilling wife?"

With tender force he put her by,
And held the deadly dagger high:
Hate for his foe, love for the maid,
Bitter struggle for mastery made.
"In love," he said, "one keeps who can:
Consent, or I will kill the man!"

Slowly he brought his dagger near;
The maiden's face showed deadly fear.
Well nigh unconscious lay the Count,
Unheeding what they talked about;
In falling he had struck a stone,
That bruised his temple to the bone.

Cried out Dorena, "I consent!"
The knife turned midway in descent.
The Count, on coming back to sense,
Saw that his bride was gone from hence;
His horse was nowhere within sight—
His was indeed a sorry plight.

He struggled down the mountain pass,
Leaving a blood-trail on the grass:
The fierce thoughts coursing through his brain
Made him forget his bodily pain.
By the roadside he found his steed,
Which, homeward bound, had stopped to feed.

Mounting, along the road he tore,
But fainted at his castle door;
Reviving soon, he told his tale,
And set retainers on the trail.
The maiden's friends were sick at heart;
Her captor had five hours' start.

Visconti and the wretched maid
At nightfall reached a sylvan glade,
Where in a hut, beside the road,
A holy friar had his abode.
"Bless us, Father," Visconti said,
As through the door the bride he led.

"Bless you, my son," the friar replied,
"And bless the lady by your side."
He led them to an inner room,
Where candlelight dispelled the gloom,
"And now," he said, "come let me hear
The reason that has brought you here."

"Make us, good Father, man and wife;
I love her more than I love life!"
"And thou, fair maid, wilt wed this youth?
Hold up thy head and speak the truth."
Dorena raised her eyes and sighed—
"Yes, Father—I'll become his bride."

The friar blessed the wedded pair;
The bridegroom seemed to tread on air;
His handsome face, aglow with bliss,
He bent to take the nuptial kiss:
She turned her back, her features set,
"Remember, I am not won yet."

For days they journeyed to this tower;
The bride continued sad and dour;
Her bridegroom strove by every art
In vain to reach his lady's heart;
Despair at times nigh filled his breast,
But still he hoped on for the best.

But days passed into weeks and months,
And still his love met with affronts:
The maiden drooped before his eyes,
And filled his heart with grief and sighs:
She'd die, he thought, if left to moan,
He'd take her to her father's home.

It cut him, like a thousand knives,
To see the light come in her eyes
When told prepare the journey take.
He tried to hide from her his ache,
But she perceived it in his face,
And in her heart a change took place.

When lying in her bed that night,
Watching the moonbeam's silvery light,
She thought of his long, patient fight
To win sweet favour in her sight:
His word he'd kept unbroken still,
Through power to enforce his will.

The pity, that to love is kin,
Was working silently within:
Had the Visconti guessed the truth,
His lady ne'er had left his roof:
Ashamed to own it to herself,
Her heart was turning from the Guelph.

Her husband thought her kindly mood
Was due alone to gratitude:
Her timid advances coldness met;
Against his heart his reason set,
Until she thought his love she'd lost:
Alas! too late she knew the cost.

* * * * *

'Twas on a clear September night,
A party halted near the site
Where the good friar had sanctified
Visconti's marriage with his bride.
The smiling moon, calm and serene,
Shed brilliant lustre o'er the scene.

Bold rocks upon the mountain wall
Looked like a castle about to fall:
On such a night 'tis said the gnome
In search of mischief loves to roam:
And sylvan forms around their fires
Finger soft music from their lyres.

'Tis then the mind, in yielding mood,
Love longs for his ambrosial food:
Denied, he heaves a thousand sighs,
That rise in vapour to the skies,
Condensing to Morphean rain,
Falls soothing on the lover's pain.

Again, Visconti and his bride
Are borne here on love's restless tide,
One to remain, the other go—
Each tread alone the path of woe:
Unhappy man, unhappy maid,
What memories fill this sylvan glade.

Attendants all to rest were sent;
Dorena lay within her tent;
Her eyelids long refused to close:
For thoughts of parting repelled repose.
Why had a perverse, cruel fate,
Love for her husband brought too late?

Thoughts of that journey months ago
By contrast but increased her woe—
Now roles had changed and 'twas her turn
To burn for love, and his to spurn:
'Twas no relief, but added shame,
To know she had herself to blame.

Now days he rode alone in pride;
Then he had scarcely left her side;
His eyes were then so tender, mild,
Now they were hard, and never smiled;
How thoughtful then his loving care;
Now his attentions all too rare.

His ring to trembling lips she pressed:
How oft he'd prayed to be so blest;
She gave to gold inanimate
What she'd denied her pleading mate:
Hot tears flowed in a flux of grief;
But brought her sore heart no relief.

Once thought she to her lord she'd go,
And tell him of her love and woe,
Ask to be taken back again—
A crumb of love she'd not disdain;
"Alas!" she told herself with pain,
"That crumb for me does not remain."

Sweet sleep, that snatches care from kings,
And calm repose to labour brings,
That o'er the invalid breathes health,
He could not buy with worlds of wealth,
Dropped cordial in Dorena's cup
And held it to her lips to sup.

Visconti did not seek his tent,
Along the rocks his steps he bent;
For days he'd hardly slept or ate—
He felt like one accurst by fate.
He stopped high on the mountain side,
Far from the tent where lay his bride.

'Twas after midnight he retraced
His steps along the rocky waste;
Passing Dorena's place of rest,
A sudden impulse stirred his breast—
His last farewell he'd take that night,
And leave before the morning light.

Gently he moved the flap aside,
Not to disturb his sleeping bride—
Alas! he thought, she'd ne'er been his—
The fates denied to him such bliss.
The moonlight showed her youthful form—
As lovely as a dewy morn.

She stirred, but did not wake, as he
Dropped at her side on bended knee:
"Andrea," she murmured—'twas his name,
Into his eyes man's teardrops came:
What trick had sleep played with her brain
That dreaming she should speak his name?

The hand that wore his wedding ring
Looked such a tiny, fragile thing,
He gently raised it to his lips,
And softly pressed the finger-tips:
"Good-by," he sighed, below his breath;
The parting was far worse than death.

As he arose the maid awoke,
And o'er her senses wonder broke:
It seemed at first a dream to be—
She scarcely dared to think 'twas he—
In sleep oft in his arms she'd lain,
But waking stole her out again.

She half arose his side to seek,
But virgin shame suffused her cheek,
She turned her head, and held it so,
Lest he should see the tell-tale glow:
This action he mistook for fear,
And anger at his presence here.

"To-night," he said, "I go away,
I shall be far ere dawn of day;
The servants with you will remain
Until you reach your sire's domain."
"My lord, my love," she softly sighed,
"I thought you'd come to claim your bride."

Fiercely he drew her to his breast,
Scarcely believing he possessed;
His lips met hers in mutual bliss—
Thus gave and took the nuptial kiss.
And now the tale has come to end—
The veil is drawn, let no hand rend.

A VENDETTA.

To dine at his villa, near Campi,
Messer. Mazzingo Tegrini
Did many Florentines invite:
And all accepted with delight;
No house in Florence that could boast
Such wines as this congenial host;
Besides, he was of noble birth,
And gold uncounted he was worth.

Laughter rang through the banquet hall;
Smiles faces wreathed of one and all;
The host's glance swept his guests with pride—
Noble Counts sat on either side;
The table groaned with best of viands;
Incomparable were the wines;
The garden sent her fragrance rare;
And sweetest music filled the air.

No ladies lent their presence there;
But not forgotten were the fair;
Each gallant youth and noble lord
Within his breast an image stored;
And when the good wine loosed the tongue,
Praises of maids and wives were sung—
A toast, drank with the utmost zest,
Was—"To the one each man loves best."

When revelry had reached its height,
The jester, a bold merry wight,
Snatched from Messer. Uberto meat,
And with sly winks began to eat:
Uberto sprang upon his feet;
Expressed displeasure with great heat—
With anger at his host he glared;
He'd been insulted, he declared.

Messer. Oddo de' Fifanti
Said the insult was but fancy—
Sharply rebuked Uberto's spleen,
No offence had intended been;
What the family jester had done,
All knew was but a bit of fun;
And he averred no man of sense
Would think the act of consequence.

Uberto gave to him the lie:
And Oddo snatched a trencher nigh,
Dashed contents in Uberto's face—
And then confusion filled the place—
Immediately steel was out,
And sides were taken in the bout:
In the wild tumult that arose,
Men friends before now fought as foes.

Noble young Buondelmonte,
The staunch friend of the Uberti,
Severely wounded in the knee
Messer. Oddo de' Fifanti.
This caused the fury to abate;
Each side agreed to separate,
To well consider the offence,
And to decide what action hence.

Oddo to his friends sent greeting,
Asked them to attend a meeting,
There to discuss what course to take—
To heal the breach or wider make:
He, himself, preferred the latter:
But of this he made no matter;
By friends' advice he'd be guided;
Upon this he'd quite decided.

Count Lamberti, at the meeting,
Arose, and said he'd been thinking
The best way to undo the snarl
Was to settle at once the quarrel,
By marriage 'twixt Monza Ponte
And the young Buondelmonte;
For Monza being Oddo's niece,
'Twould bring the families back to peace.

Of all suggestions this seemed best;
Forthwith the meeting acquiesced—
And the proposal, for consent,
To the offender's family sent.
'Twas accepted by the latter—
Hymen would adjust the matter;
All those concerned sighed happily,
An end to see of the melee.

The two contracting parties met;
The day for plighting troth was set.
The bridegroom gave the wedding ring,
A custom old and proper thing:
The marriage was to follow soon,
Upon the fulness of the moon:
All went as smoothly as could be,
As far as human eye could see.

But there was one of Spartan pride,
Who thought revenge had been denied;
Besides she wished another bride
Placed by Buondelmonte's side—
This was Madonna Aldruda,
Wife of Forese Donati;
She vowed the marriage she'd prevent;
And for Buondelmonte sent.

At her request the young man came;
These words addressed to him the dame—
“Fie upon thee, unworthy knight—
Thou art indeed a sorry wight,
When fear of the Fifanti’s knife
Could drive thee to accept a wife:
Come, throw aside both her and fear;
Choose in her place this damsel here.”

A chamber door she open threw;
Her lovely daughter showed to view—
An apparition of such beauty
Undermined his sense of duty.
In pure radiant maidenhood;
Soliciting his love she stood.
He longed to take her in his arms;
Ne’er had his eyes beheld such charms.

Though better reason was o’ercome,
And conscience well nigh stricken dumb,
Still, resolution he’d to state—
“Alas! alas! ’tis now too late!”
The mother flashed her eyes of jet,
“ ’Tis not—for thou canst have her yet,
If thou but dare the step to take.”
Said he—“I’d dare hell for her sake.”

He did not see his family wraith,
As stepping forth he pledged his faith—
A faith no longer his to give—
Thus honor died that love might live.
His perjury he charged to fate,
’Twas she who chose his second mate—
He had no power against her will:
Destiny rules for good or ill.

Friendship's claims were as naught beside
Love for his new affianced bride—
Thus he reflected in his pride;
And conscience soon forgot to chide;
Ah, better if his guilt had glowed—
And, like a fiery river, flowed—
Shown him the demon he'd unchain,
To dye his land with bloody stain.

'Twas not until the nuptial morn
The faithless bridegroom showed his scorn
To her he first had pledged his word—
Of other pledge no one had heard—
The mode planned to reject his bride
Aimed deep at the Amidei pride—
The hour she was to have borne his name
He cast her off in public shame.

Kinfolld gathered for the wedding,
About the Amidei dwelling,
When suddenly there rose a cheer,
The groom was seen approaching near;
But joy was throttled by surprise,
To see the cold look in his eyes;
Forward he rode with haughty pride,
Past the home of the waiting bride.

Onward he went right through them all;
Silence fell like a heavy pall;
Looking majestic as a king,
He bore another wedding ring—
This to the lady of his heart,
Leaving Monza with shame to smart—
Second contract consummated
Top of one he'd violated.

Could an insult have been greater?
Shown a more vindictive hater?
Small wonder that the bride's friends raged
Like lions wild when trapped and caged;
Such insults were not to be borne;
They'd make the youth regret his scorn;
In conclave the Amidei sate,
To decide the perjurer's fate.

Each man a moody aspect wore;
Bitter resentment each heart bore;
On full revenge each mind was set.
What kind would be most adequate?
Those most temperate at the meeting
Advocated a sound beating;
The insult others would efface
By gashing Buondelmonte's face.

Forward Mosca Lamberti sprang,
And brought his fist down with a bang,
"Beat him, or wound him, as ye wilt,
Be sure your own blood will be spilt;
Wounds, or death, whate'er the sequel,
You'll find consequences equal;
No, mete him out full penalty,
Up and be doing, no delay."

These words of Mosca turned the scale;
They laid a plot to last detail;
The time appointed was the day
The bridegroom would be on his way
To his expectant happy bride,
On the first morn of Eastertide;
The place appointed was the same
He'd cast poor Monza off in shame.

* * * * *

Upon a glossy milk-white horse,
The heedless youth came on his course,
His mantle white o'er vest of red,
A wedding garland on his head,
Upon his lips a happy smile,
Within his heart no thought of guile,
Dame Nature wore a gladsome air;
Who'd thought assassins lurking there!

Beneath the battlements he rode,
Where the Amidei family bode,
Not thinking of his trust betrayed,
Slowly his way the false youth made,
So full his mind of coming bliss
To all else quite oblivious:
Thus he under the casement came
Of the maiden he'd put to shame.

He jostled here two drunken tars,
Near the worn statue of Roman Mars,
He turned to look upon their case
And saw not the descending mace;
No time to draw or make a sound,
Ere he was stretched upon the ground;
The wedding wreath crushed o'er his face,
He lay at the grim idol's base.

The kinsmen of the maiden scorned,
About his prostrate body swarmed,
So eager was each man to slay,
They almost fought to reach their prey;
Soon deadly steel, with lightning speed,
Had finished the revengeful deed—
They met a gay attired groom,
And left him bloody for the tomb.

The laws of Florence punished men
Who faithless to their vows had been,
But death for such cause was unheard;
The whole community was stirred;
The tidings of the murder spread
And people's hearts were filled with dread;
With reason, too, for well all knew
A general blood feud would ensue.

Placed on a bier, that all might see,
The head upon the young bride's knee,
The corpse was borne the streets along,
Through a wild and disordered throng.
Lovely Donati, anguish wrung,
O'er her dead love like a lily hung—
Although no tears her eyelids shed,
Her face was pallid as the dead.

That bloody moment cut the cord
That bound the demon of discord;
Not only Florence rued that day—
Dissension spread through Italy:
'Tis said 'twas thirty years or more
Before the factious strife was o'er.
The fair Donati died unwed—
Long faithful to her murdered dead.



